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C O M M I T T E E o f A S S O C I A T I O N

O F T H E
C O U N T Y o f Y O R K ,

T O T H E
E L E C T O R S o f t h e C O U N T I E S , C I T I E S , a n d B O R O U G H S

W I T H I N T H E
K I N G D O M o f G R E A T B R I T A I N .

T O W H I C H I S A D D E D ,
A N A P P E N D I X ,

C O N T A I N I N G

The R E S O L U T I O N S o f t h a t C O M M I T T E E ,

At their *Meeting* held on the 17th of *October*, 1791,

FORM of the PETITION agreed to at the *Meeting* of the *County* of
York, held on the 30th of December, 1779, and shortly afterwards
presented to PARLIAMENT.

FORM of ASSOCIATION agreed to at the *Meeting* of the *County*
of *York*, held the 18th of March, 1780.

A L S O ,

A STATE of the ASSOCIATING COUNTIES, &c. and the
Objects of their respective ASSOCIATIONS.

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N

Y O R K :

PRINTED BY W. BLANCHARD AND CO. AND SOLD BY MR. STOCKDALE, PICCA-
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17(9) 1-8 25

A SECOND ADDRESS, &c.

PARLIAMENT, in its original form, seems to have been admirably fitted to resist the attack of corruption. In that primitive state, a majority of the Electors of England appointed a majority of the House of Commons; and in fact, the right of election annually vested in the Body of the People a regular and complete controul over their Trustees. In an Assembly so constituted, the poison of corruption could hardly find admittance in any dangerous degree; respect to the constituent body would generally operate as a preservative against it; and on any appearance of infection, that effectual remedy which the public possessed would be instantly applied. But our easy unsuspicious ancestors unwisely suffered our Monarchs from Henry VI. down to Queen Elizabeth, to mar the ancient Constitution by a most disproportionate addition of Boroughs. By that unhappy negligence, the Nation lost in substance the just and necessary right of controul; and then, the corruption of a Parliament, no longer checked by the general voice of the People, ceased to be an impracticable attempt.

But though the corruptibility of Parliament may be justly dated from that innovation of Royal Authority, the actual corruption of it was reserved for a more unfortunate period. The seeds of political depravity were for ages latent in the defective frame of the House of Commons; and it was possible they might still have remained there, in a state of harmless inactivity, if chance, and the ill-judged parsimony of our forefathers had not presented to the Crown the
A opportunity

opportunity for Parliamentary Seduction. From the depreciation of money, the ancient salaries paid by the counties, &c. to their respective Members, had become too insignificant to be worth their acceptance; and from a most absurd frugality, the necessary augmentation had been improvidently omitted. Hence arose a facility to create a corrupt dependence on the Crown, just when the danger of all attempts to controul or abolish Parliament by force had been fully proved by repeated experience. The growing disposition in that Assembly to listen to temptation, was not long unobserved; it was seized with alacrity, and improved with assiduity; and thus the evils which the inequality of our popular representation is adapted to produce, were at last drawn forth to actual existence.

The virtue of Parliament which had resisted every effort of violence, was soon relaxed by the skilful distribution of emolument. As this lucrative intercourse grew habitual, their ancient jealousy of the Crown decreased; their responsibility to that Public from whom they derived their existence, gradually became an obsolete idea; and in its stead, more courtly maxims of duty, better suited to the new object of their devotion, were easily introduced. At last, a coalition unknown to the genuine Constitution took place; and Parliament, now disengaged from the Body of the Nation, like the Senate of Imperial Rome, meanly submitted to a dependence on that Power, whose incroachments it was originally formed to prevent and controul.

To men of political sagacity, it was not difficult to discern this change in our system of Government. By them its rise and progress were distinctly marked, and its pernicious consequences were fairly foretold.

But

But the Public, with a generous credulity, continued to hold Parliaments in that veneration which their former fidelity had so well deserved. The forms of the Constitution, they saw, were still maintained; and the parade of debate still gave to that obsequious Assembly the air and semblance of its ancient freedom. During the earlier part of this period, the Nation was too much dazzled with the splendour of military glory, to remark the growing influence of the Crown. Afterwards when the practice of corruption was avowed by the Minister himself, the dissatisfaction of the Public was lulled into acquiescence by the flow of general wealth, and the mildness of Administration. The two first Princes of the Hanoverian Line hardly knew the extent of that authority which they had so recently obtained. Their right to the throne was not admitted without dispute; and the deposition of James, which had led to their elevation, was an instructive lesson which they could never forget. From these considerations, and from the natural goodness and moderation of those Princes, they were content to exercise their authority with caution and lenity; never exceeding the limits of the law, and manifesting on all occasions a respectful deference to the sense of the Public. Under their gracious and fortunate Administration, the mischiefs of corruption were happily palliated; and hence, rational disapprobation, and the apprehension of evil, yielded to the Sense of ease and actual prosperity.

But those popular maxims of Government, were less suitable to that situation of superior power, to which their Successor attained. *He was born and bred a Briton*; and He had the fortune to engage the affections of those men, who, in apparent contradiction to their high monarchical principles, had long endeavoured to depress his family; but who at last forget-

ting *the exiled Prince*, transferred to *Him* all the warmth of their zeal and attachment. He was aided by the accession of these natural Partizans of the Crown, and He was enriched by that augmentation of patronage, which before the conciliation of his new friends, had been unwarily established as a balance to their disaffection. In these circumstances, instead of the condescension and cautious policy of the preceding reigns, Ministers were encouraged to adopt, and enabled to realize more lofty ideas of Government. In their conception, it ceased to be necessary to conceal from the public eye, the full extent of the influence of the Crown, and by their instigation, an open and unscrupulous exercise of it was resolved on.

A fit opportunity for displaying the plenitude of power was quickly found. The popular principles, the zeal, the intrepidity, perhaps the indiscretion of a private Gentleman, had given displeasure *where* it was most dangerous to displease. To gratify resentment *there*, the Commons were solicited to punish the offender; and that Assembly could stoop to oppress an already injured individual, and in violation of the first and most important principle of the Constitution, to exclude him from his lawful seat in Parliament. During the course of that famous persecution, England first beheld a spectacle, which, if the ancient proportion had been maintained in the popular representation, must have been for ever unseen; a House of Commons distrusted by the Nation, and at variance with it. Hence, by turns these petitions of the People to the Crown against the treachery of their Trustees; and to their Trustees against the great and increasing influence of the Crown. But as the Minister of the Sovereign wisely protected his auxiliary Commons from the indignation of their constituents; his

his faithful Allies have since returned the obligation, with all the zeal of gratitude. The studied contempt with which those complaints were treated from the Throne, has been fully repaid in the Senate, by a more insulting neglect of those Petitions, which were acknowledged to be just. The proofs of the absolute ascendant of the Crown, have thus been rendered complete and indisputable; the dream of the Independence of Parliament, so long and so fondly believed, is now a detected illusion; and in consequence of that discovery, discontents have arisen in the Nation, which can only be suppressed by the utter extinction of Liberty, OR SATISFIED BY SOME SUBSTANTIAL REFORMATION OF PARLIAMENT.

It would be injurious from the present inactivity of many of our countrymen, to suppose they are not attached to the cause of Liberty, with the same generous ardour which distinguished their ancestors. The mass of the People is yet untainted by corruption; it is still animated with equal zeal, and enlightened perhaps, with a superior knowledge of the true nature and end of Government. Their integrity and their attachment to the Constitution may be relied on, with equal confidence. But the novelty of their present situation, the difficulties and disadvantages of their controversy with the Crown, the repeated rejection of a National Petition by their own Representatives, may well produce a pause of astonishment. In this anxious interval of suspense and gradual recollection, it behoves the Agents of the People thoroughly to explore the ground before them; to inquire from what causes their first effort has been defeated; and to consider by what means the obstacles to their final success may be best removed, or most happily surmounted.

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In this early stage of the contest, the People seem to have been foiled, not so much by the strength of their opponents, as from their own inexperience and disunion. The alliance between the Crown and a dependent Parliament, however unnatural it may appear on the principles of the Constitution, is yet too strongly cemented by mutual benefits to be dissolved by vague and desultory efforts; by Petitions eagerly adopted by the Nation, but irresolutely supported, and at last abandoned with pusillanimity, on a second or a third repulse. With the People, there is an undoubted superiority of numbers; but in many districts, the popular Assemblies, partly from improvidence, partly from a candid expectation of redress by Parliament, neglected to make those necessary arrangements, without which, they could neither co-operate with other petitioning Bodies, nor give a continued support to their Petitions: and thus acting without steadiness, without concert, and uniformity of plan, they have been baffled by the art and activity, the union and regularity of discipline of the Mercenaries of the Crown.

It is by the weight of a General Association, in support of some rational and specific proposal of Redress, the Body of the People must regain their lost influence over their Trustees. That measure alone can collect and consolidate their force, and give permanence and systematical Union to their opposition. Experience has already shown upon a more limited scale, that Association is a *practicable measure*; and that it is a measure of *unquestionable legality* appears from the spirit of our laws; from the express right to present Petitions to Parliament, which involves the right to join in any peaceful mode for the more effectual support of those Petitions; and from the acquiescence and tacit confession of the adverse party themselves.

themselves. The application of this inherent power of the People may have been suspended hitherto, by the real or supposed fidelity of Parliament. But when can Associations for obtaining a just attention to the complaints of the Nation be necessary, if not, when Parliament itself admits that, alarming abuses do actually exist, and yet refuses to correct them? When that Assembly, in a moment of repentance, confesses the over-ruling influence of the Crown, and seems to invite the People, by a strenuous exertion of their Constitutional Powers, to remove those shackles from which it wants the virtue to disengage itself.

Under such a perversion of the end for which Parliament was instituted, it would be slavish timidity to acquiesce and submit. On the other hand, to meditate schemes of violence and forcible resistance, would be fool-hardy rashness and impetuosity : it would even be unpardonable folly not to discourage seriously such ill-advised attempts. But they who are friends to the Peace and to the Liberty of their Country, may safely steer a middle course between those fatal extremes. By the timely adoption of a legal and constitutional Association, the Nation may be preserved from the hazards and calamities of Civil War, and from the more lasting and intolerable miseries of Arbitrary Government.

To persons of a mild and cautious character of virtue, the propriety of this mode of opposition, may perhaps appear in some degree questionable. They see, not without concern for the Constitution, its strong and apparent tendency to destruction ; but they distrust that eagerness of zeal, and that more hardy disposition to serve the Public, which prompt men of warmer, but perhaps less amiable dispositions,

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to stand forth in the hour of danger. By the adherents of corruption these suspicions are cherished by every artifice of misrepresentation; and if the end proposed by the People be just and necessary, if the means hitherto employed be unexceptionably lawful, future designs are but too successfully imputed to them, which every wise and honest man must disapprove. Hence the long neutrality of many liberal and worthy men! Sunk in a state of inefficient repose, they slumber in the midst of perils; and under the specious name of Moderation, cover even from themselves their languour and inactivity. On this large and important class of men, the Rectitude of Opposition to a Corrupt System of Government, may fail for a time to make a sufficient impression; but at last dire necessity, and the approach of unavoidable distress, must awake them from their dream of security.

At that moment, when the alarm of danger rouses even the indolent; when men of a mild and unenterprising temper are ready to associate in the common defence; then it is devoutly to be hoped, THE FRIENDS OF THEIR COUNTRY will have adjusted their disputes; and having settled their plan of public Reformation with prudence, will be prepared to support it with unanimity. Then it will behove the Opponents of the undue influence of the Crown to unite their legal exertions, and to pour on, in one unbroken current, against the corruptions of our Government: For that moment will be decisive of our fate. If the Collective Body be then misled or divided in the pursuit of separate or improper objects, their pacific efforts must be wasted once more in unconnected and unavailing struggles. And in that case, it is easy to foresee, that no future attempts
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to restore the Constitution by legal means, can have any rational hope or prospect of success.

Among the active Opponents of the undue influence of the Crown, the Advocates for the Oeconomical Reformation *alone*, compose a numerous, and in rank and figure, the most distinguished class. To recommend *their palliative plan*, they display the mischiefs of innovation, and treat propositions for the melioration of Parliament as specious, but as impracticable projects. In their conception, the improvement of the popular representation by any of those alterations which other Reformers have proposed, is a speculative advantage almost impossible to be attained; and a shorter duration of Parliament is not only undesirable, but positively evil. Instead of attempting to correct the internal disposition of Parliament to admit temptation, they would content themselves with reducing that ostensible fund of corruption, which is externally applied with such fatal success. This, they contend, was the object of Reformation which lately formed the true centre of union of the English People; in pursuit of which exhortations to unanimity would have been altogether superfluous and unnecessary. And they observe, not without a mixture of severity, that if the Nation had not been misled by wild and visionary schemes, their discontents would have been soon appeased by the satisfactory redress of those grievances which had been the subject of their unanimous complaint.

It must be confessed, the ground on which the People *commenced* their opposition, was chosen with propriety. They felt the hardships of an expensive war; they saw glaring abuses in the management of the public purse; and the request for the correction of those abuses was founded on principles which the
Friend

Friend to Liberty must approve, and which even the Advocate for War could not contradict. But if that patronage which forms the visible influence of the Crown had been abridged in the most indefensible instances, *without a radical Reformation of Parliament*, the practice of Corruption would still have been carried on to as great an extent as ever, only perhaps in a more dangerous and degrading mode. The means of seduction are in the hands of Ministers, to be applied at their discretion; and self-preservation would have taught them the proper application of those means. Who can suppose, *loans of money* would not have been contracted on terms still more grossly disadvantageous to the Nation; and the loss of sinecure places and unmerited pensions would not have been compensated by shares of *beneficial subscriptions*, in an adequate proportion? or, if the Minister had chosen to vary his mode of gratification, what could have hindered the immediate increase of the *Secret-Service-Money*? or the augmentation of the *Royal Debts*, incurred to any amount which might be necessary, and sure to be discharged, without examination, by a grateful Parliament?

When a Senate, chiefly nominated by venal or dependent Electors, has received the taint of corruption, it wants that corrective principle which might throw off the infection, and restore its original purity—the controul of honest and uninfluenced Constituents. In such an Assembly acceptance frequently repeated wears off the sensations of shame and remorse; the guilty habit of receiving gradually creates a demand that must be satisfied, and thus CORRUPTION becomes at last the avowed principle of Government. In this stage of political depravity, a Parliament accustomed to prostitution may be induced to embrace the most pernicious measures of a
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bad but prodigal Administration, with as much warmth, as it would reject the best and wisest plans of that honest Statesman who should scorn the support of pecuniary influence. This is the consummation of a corrupt system of Government, which evidently contains the seeds of dissolution. Ruin is its natural tendency, and must be its certain consequence, unless by an amended representation in Parliament, the due controul of the Constitution be restored to the Body of the People.

Events had almost verified the truth of this speculation, when the increasing influence of the Crown alarmed the fears and excited the opposition of the Country. At that moment, *without previous concert or communication*, a PLAN for the better Security of the Independence of Parliament, &c. was announced in the House of Commons. The views of that Bill were nearly coincident with those by which the People meant to regulate their proposed Petition; and it is acknowledged with due respect to its celebrated Author, that it was happily calculated to facilitate the wishes *then* expressed by the Public. It hardly could be expected that a Senator yet uncertain of the popular support, however distinguished by zeal and abilities, should offer a more extensive plan of redress. But when the People, distrusting their Representatives, sought protection, against the over-bearing influence of the Crown, in legal Association and in the Reformation of Parliament, it was then as little to be expected that the popular Agents should stop short, and recommend, as the Object of Union, that Oeconomical System which is certainly inadequate to the efforts and expectations of the Collective Body. That conduct would have been a contradiction to the *first intimation* of their purpose, and to all their subsequent proceedings;
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it would have been treachery to themselves, and to those by whom they were appointed to act; and it would have forfeited their claim to any share of the Public Confidence, as disinterested and independent men. Misrepresentation, in language alike injurious to the Leaders of Opposition, and to the popular Agents, would have irrecoverably blasted the Public Cause, as a device cunningly contrived by disappointed Statesmen, and their factious Adherents. And thus, in pursuit of unanimity on *that ground*, distrust and jealousy would have been still more widely spread, and the Associations of the People, instead of being more closely cemented, would have been divided and broken up by an irreparable breach.

Men conversant in the business of Parliament may have regretted that a more cautious policy did not restrain the zeal of the Associations to the correction of *official abuses*; and the Associations in their turn may have lamented that more vigorous counsels did not determine their Parliamentary friends to adopt those *primary objects* of the popular plan, which alone can give efficacy or stability to the Oeconomical Reformation. These are the unavoidable differences, not the faults, of Public Men, acting with integrity, but *without mutual intelligence* in circumstances which are in a great measure new to the most extensive observation. But since late experience has still more clearly proved the utter degeneracy of Parliament, and consequently the distrust of the People has been increased and confirmed, a more effectual Reformation may now appear evidently necessary even to the former friends of palliative measures. And since a divided opposition to the Crown cannot accomplish a due reduction of its alarming power; and no considerable Body of the People can ever be induced to unite in a steady defence of the common liberties,

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but on the ground of Parliamentary Reformation; it surely may be hoped from the virtue and public spirit of those honoured persons that their Coalition with the People *on that ground* is not a distant event.

It is not surprizing that even among the declared friends to a Reformation of Parliament, a considerable variation of sentiment should be found, and different systems of constitutional improvement should appear to different minds to deserve the preference; for on this, or on any subject, who can expect an exact coincidence of judgment in such a multitude of Independent Men?

That the representation of the People is extremely inadequate; that the septennial duration of Parliament is a dangerous and unwarrantable Innovation; that Corruption cannot be restrained; that our Liberties cannot be secured but by the correction of those gross abuses; these are propositions in which there is a most unanimous agreement. But whether the People should attempt to restore annual Parliaments; to extend the right of suffrage universally; and to establish a perfect equality of representation; or, whether it does not belove them rather to confine their efforts to the accomplishment of a more limited plan; to shorten the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years, and to reinforce the sound part of our representation by the addition of One Hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis: These are questions which for some time were the subject of frequent discussion and much anxious deliberation; but not more than their importance to the Public well deserved.

On behalf of the more extensive plan, much was urged on the true principles of Government with indefa-

defatigable zeal; and the considerations which could be drawn from the natural rights of Men and the ancient privileges of Englishmen were presented in every form of argument, with equal industry and ability. It is indisputably true, that *annual elections* of Parliament were from the earliest times the practice of our forefathers: And frequency of election in a state of representation *not essentially defective*, would tend strongly to maintain a due connection between the Constituent Body and their Trustees; it would diffuse a more general knowledge of the importance of that right; and the attachment to our happy Constitution would be more sincere and general, as its privileges were more extended and better understood. That mankind are naturally equal, is also a proposition which cannot be denied; and although wherever Society is established, the introduction of inequality in some respects, is unavoidable, yet every humane and equitable mind must disapprove invidious exclusions, by which that inequality is unnecessarily increased. The right of suffrage, though not universally, was more extensively enjoyed by our ancestors before the Reign of Henry VI. than in the succeeding period: And if the manners and prejudices of the present age could admit *the restoration of that privilege* in its fullest extent, with an *annual choice of representatives*, the Advocates for the more moderate plan would rejoice at the change.

The diversity of sentiment, therefore, which has in some measure retarded the union of the people, arose, not from a difference of political principles; for in them there is an entire agreement, but solely from considerations of a prudential nature. The questions in debate have been, not, whether those doctrines be maintainable in argument, for it is admitted they are; but whether it be probable in the
present

present state of the nation, that those doctrines in their full extent, are reducible to practice?—And if it be highly improbable, that a Reformation on that extensive plan could be carried into execution, whether it be not expedient that the People waive somewhat of their justifiable claims, and content themselves with that mode of Redress which is *less complete in theory*, but which appears *more easily attainable* by peaceful means, and when attained, *fully adequate* to the purpose of their opposition?

On the one hand it was observed, that an Army, as dangerous to the Constitution by the weight of influence as by its military prowess, is now become an established augmentation of the Royal Power; that an immense National Debt, with its concomitant train of taxes, contracts, subscriptions, creates another abundant source of influence unknown to our ancestors; that a large accession of Patronage has accrued to the Crown from the East-Indian Territories, and the other numerous Settlements of the British Empire; that Parliament itself, seduced by those multiplied attractions, has become but too visibly dependent on the Crown; that if this great Aggregate of Power should receive any material augmentation, it would be impossible by any union which could be formed, to recover the balance of the Constitution; and consequently, although this ought not to intimidate but rather to excite the People instantly to concert the lawful means of that recovery, yet since the power to be opposed is truly formidable, and a defeat would be fatal to all succeeding generations, that it behoves them to proceed with caution equal to their fortitude. It was farther observed, that while the adherents of corruption would alike brand with the odious name of *innovations*, the improvements held out by each of the popular plans, however

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authorised they may be by former example, or justified by reason and the necessity of reformation, *the more extensive system* proposing an abolition of all our present election-franchises, and a distribution of those franchises anew in a different proportion, would probably appear injurious also to a multitude of Electors, who yet would zealously support *the more moderate plan* for restoring the Constitution; that this total departure from the present establishment of the Lower House of Parliament, even where private interest was not materially affected, would alienate many by the magnitude of the operation, and more perhaps by its contrariety to the manners of the age; that it would offend the pride of the wealthy; excite the fears of the moderate; and shock the prejudices of men unaccustomed to political speculation; and consequently that to contend with the Crown on this disadvantageous ground, would be to expose the Liberties of the Nation to almost certain ruin, by struggling to communicate the election-franchise to persons who too seldom know the value of it, or express a wish to obtain it.

On the other hand, it was considered that although *the more moderate plan* would enlarge the House of Commons, yet it would leave the present fabrick untouched, would preserve the franchises of the whole mass of Electors undiminished; and in every respect would be less remote from the habits and practice of the age; that by the addition of at least One Hundred Members to the representation of the Counties and the Metropolis, their inferiority to the Boroughs would be in a great measure redressed, and the advantage of those Electors who constitute the bulk of the Nation would be promoted without injury, and with little or no inconvenience to any other class of Constituents; that although annual Parliaments cer-
tainly

ly were not excluded by the more limited proposal, yet in fact its immediate aim was the repeal of the Septennial Bill; which being confessedly a temporary expedient, utterly repugnant to the spirit of the Constitution, however excusable from the necessity of those times, would probably be now obtained with less difficulty than annual Parliaments; and might properly be considered as the best preparatory measure to their acquisition; and consequently that in all these respects the preference in the view of feasibility was evidently due to the more limited plan.

In regard of efficacy *the more extensive scheme* might indeed claim the priority of choice, if under the present circumstances of the Nation the establishment of it could be accomplished. But what is the superiority of an impracticable system? The praise and perhaps the wish of the rational Patriot, but not the object of his political labours; for they will ever be directed to that best and most beneficial plan, which in the present circumstances can be attained. It is the just complaint of the Nation, that a corrupt majority of Members may be gained to support the most pernicious measures against the sense of the incorrupt part of the Legislature, and the wishes of the Public; and this aggravation of the evil, that the possibility of relief by popular interference is protracted by a triennial duration of Parliament. To *these fundamental abuses* the repeal of the Septennial Bill, and the addition of One Hundred Members to the Council, &c. as a balance to the Boroughs would be a *partial correction*. Under this amended representation, purged from every visible taint of undue influence, and subject to the more frequent controul of the Nation by elections at an interval never exceeding three years, the whole System of Corruption would be overturned, and the Constitution would

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acquire a degree of permanent security which it never attained in any preceding period.

By considerations like these, the People were induced to frame their Associations on this more limited ground; and, as it then seemed reasonable to conclude, so recent experience has now most manifestly proved that, their plan was not too narrow for the views and expectations of their Countrymen. With some exceptions of no great moment, the principles have been adopted or approved by every Associated Body, and confirmed by a General Declaration from the respective Committees. These principles have also received the declared approbation of Senators in each House, whose Wisdom, Integrity and Public Spirit, are at once the honour and reproach of those Assemblies.

A Bill on *the more enlarged plan* was indeed offered to the Lords by a Nobleman of the first rank and reputation*; and the motion was recorded on the journal as a solemn recognition of those principles. But no Association has been formed on that ground, because in the popular apprehension even the weighty recommendation could not compensate the great and perhaps insurmountable difficulties of the measure. But when the People had thus decided in given their preference to *the more limited plan*, the Noble Advocate, far from pressing them with the pertinacity of disputation to reconsider and adopt his favoured system, generously laboured in concert with an Illustrious Friend† to accomplish a general Coalition on the ground of their Association. This was the wisdom of judicious Statesmen—this was

* His Grace the Duke of Richmond. † The Right Honourable the Earl of Shelburne.

magnanimity of true Patriots. Their virtuous, though hitherto unavailing, efforts will be remembered with lasting gratitude and veneration; and in their zealous assistance on every future emergency, the trust and confidence of the Nation will be reposed.

The Committee of Association for the County of York have once more presumed thus freely to communicate to their Fellow Electors their sentiments on *the decline of the Constitution and the means of its Restoration*. From this survey of the various plans of reformation which have been offered to the People, their choice seems wisely to have been fixed on that system in which *efficacy* and *practicability* are most advantageously combined; and in the judgment of this Committee, if that SUBSTANTIAL REDRESS cannot be obtained, the formalities of an Upper and Lower Assembly may still be continued, but the liberty of Britain must soon be no more. When the Nation has lost the ordinary controul of the Constitution over the Representative Body; when notwithstanding their repeated complaints, alarming abuses are protected and increased, and measures destructive to the common weal are supported and pushed on by that Assembly, the necessity for *some popular interference in a less ordinary way*, becomes apparent and incontestible. To rectify a disordered legislature must indeed be a work of the greatest toil and difficulty; but there is yet in the Independent spirit of the Community a fund of vigour adequate to the task; and the ancient spirit of the Constitution still affords unexhausted resources to the People, for lawful, orderly and effectual interposition. Peaceful Association is the lawful mode adopted by this Committee, in concert with many of their countrymen; and by a steady prosecution of the *more moderate plan for the Reformation of Parliament in this mode*, they

they still trust the Constituent Body may regain its ascendant over the Representative Assembly. Far, therefore, from wishing to promote confusion, or to prompt their fellow citizens to deeds of violence and desperation; they exhort them with conscientious sincerity to confine their efforts within the bounds of legality. But within those limits they exhort them with equal earnestness, resolutely to oppose that System of Corruption which is alike the bane of National Morality, and the ruin of Public Liberty.

With these views the Committee of Yorkshire first embarked in this cause; in strict conformity with them they have hitherto proceeded, and are determined to regulate their whole political deportment. *They have been menaced by High Authority; they have been defamed by Reverend Calumny;* but conscious of the purity of their intentions, certain of the legality of their conduct, they cheerfully commit their reputation to the justice of their countrymen, AND THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY TO THE PROTECTION OF THOSE LAWS WHICH CANNOT BE INFRINGED, WITHOUT A DIRECT ASSUMPTION OF DESPOTIC POWER.

T H E E N D.

A P P E N D I X.
R E S O L U T I O N S
O F T H E
C O M M I T T E E of A S S O C I A T I O N
F O R T H E
C O U N T Y O F Y O R K,

At their MEETING held on the 17th Day of OCTOBER, 1781.

YORK TAVERN, Oct. 17, 1781.

P R E S E N T,

At a Meeting of the Committee of Association.

Rev. Mr. Wyvill, Chairman
The Earl of Effingham
The Dean of York
Mr Chaloner
Rev. Mr. Mafon
Sir George Strickland
Mr. Morritt
Mr. H. Duncombe
General Hale
Sir R. D. Hildyard
Sir James Norcliffe
Mr. Strickland of Welburn
Mr. Strickland of Beverley
Mr. Tooker
Mr. Grimston
Mr. Shore
Mr. Sykes
Mr. Withers
Mr. Cradock
Rev Mr. Robinson
Mr. Walker
Mr. Walker, jun.
Mr. Pool
Mr. Dring
Mr. Croft, jun.
Rev. Mr. Dade
Mr. Foljambe
Rev. Mr. Bourne
Mr. P. Milnes
Rev. Mr. Cayley
Mr. Yorke
Mr. Dixon

Mr. St. Quintin
Dr. Swainston
Mr. F. Smyth
Mr. James Milnes, jun.
Mr. R. S. Milnes
Lieut. Col. Thornton
Rev. Mr. Dixon
Rev. Mr. Yarker
Mr. Baynes, jun.
Mr. Booth
Mr. Rawson
Mr. Matthews
Mr. Athorpe
Rev. Mr. Wilkinson
Mr. Turner
Rev. Mr. Comber
Mr. Stovin
Rev. Mr. Lawton
Mr. Hill
Sir William Milner
Mr. Lloyd
Mr. Dawson
Mr. Duncombe
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Courtney
Mr. Arthington
Mr. Maude
Mr. Dalton
Mr. Croft
Rev. Mr. Shuttleworth,
(elected this Day.)

RESOLVED, That the following Members be added to this Committee :

William Bagshaw, Esq; of Coates Hall
 Rev Richard Shuttleworth, of Kirkleatham
 Jonathan Walker, Esq; of Masbrough
 William Warner, Esq; of Foston
 Henry Legard, Esq; of Beverley.

Whereas it has been represented to this Committee, that the conduct of the Clergy who are Members of this Association, hath been censured from High Authority ; and that they have been given to understand that their LATE EFFORTS in support of the Liberty and Constitution of this country were *foreign to the function of a Clergyman, and not the road to preferment*,

RESOLVED, That a Protestant by entering into Holy Orders does not abandon his civil rights.

RESOLVED, That the Thanks of this Committee be given to those Reverend Gentlemen who, thus preferring the public good to their own private emoluments, have stood forth the firm friends to the true interests of their country.

Read the paper intituled, " A Second Address from the Committee of Association for the County of York, to the Electors of the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs, within the Kingdom of Great Britain."

‡§‡ *This Address is contained in the foregoing pages*

RESOLVED, That the Address now read be adopted as the act of this assembly, and that the Chairman be requested to publish the same in the manner he shall judge most proper.

RESOLVED, That this Committee do adjourn to the Thursday in Easter week next, subject to an earlier call by the Sub-Committee, or of the Chairman at the request of any five members.

C. W Y V I L L, Chairman.

FORM of the PETITION

AGREED TO AT THE

MEETING of the COUNTY of YORK,

Held the 30th of DECEMBER, 1779,

And shortly afterwards presented to PARLIAMENT.

*To the Honourable the COMMONS of GREAT BRITAIN,
in Parliament assembled:*

*The PETITION of the GENTLEMEN, CLERGY, and FREE-
HOLDERS of the COUNTY of YORK.*

Sheweth,

THAT this Nation hath been engaged for several years in a most expensive and unfortunate war; that many of our valuable Colonies, having actually declared themselves independent, have formed a strict confederacy with *France* and *Spain*, the dangerous and inveterate enemies of *Great-Britain*; that the consequence of these combined misfortunes hath been a large addition to the National Debt; a heavy accumulation of taxes; a rapid decline of the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of the Kingdom.

Alarmed at the diminished resources and growing burthens of this Country, and convinced that rigid frugality is now indispensably necessary in every department of the State, your Petitioners observe with grief, that, notwithstanding the calamitous and impoverished condition of the Nation, much Public Money has been improvidently squandered, and that many Individuals enjoy sinecure places, efficient places with exorbitant emoluments, and pensions unmerited by public service, to a large and still increasing amount; whence the Crown has acquired a great and unconstitutional Influence, which, if not check'd, may soon prove fatal to the Liberties of this Country.

Your

Your Petitioners conceiving that the true end of every legitimate Government is not the emolument of ANY INDIVIDUAL, but the welfare of the Community; and considering that, by the Constitution of this Realm, the National Purse is intrusted in a peculiar manner to the custody of this Honourable House, beg leave farther to represent, that until effectual measures be taken to redress the oppressive grievances herein stated, the grant of any additional sum of Public Money, beyond the produce of the present taxes, will be injurious to the Rights and Property of the People, and derogatory from the Honour and Dignity of Parliament.

Your Petitioners therefore appealing to the justice of this Honourable House, do most earnestly request that, before any new burthens are laid upon this Country, effectual measures may be taken by this House, to inquire into and correct the gross abuses in the expenditure of Public Money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to rescind and abolish all sinecure places and unmerited pensions; and to appropriate the produce to the necessities of the State, in such manner as to the wisdom of Parliament shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

F O R M

FORM of ASSOCIATION

AGREED TO AT

The GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

COUNTRY of YORK.

Held the 28th of MARCH, 1780.

WHEREAS during the present expensive and unfortunate war, the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of this Kingdom have been greatly diminished ; the Public Burdens grievously augmented by the annual imposition of new and additional taxes ; the National Debt enormously increased ; and the undue influence of the Crown extended to an alarming degree by these very circumstances which threaten the utter impoverishment of this Country : And whereas, in these times of National Difficulty and Distress, a just redress of grievances can only be expected from a free and uncorrupted Parliament ; and measures tending, in a legal and peaceful way, to restore the Freedom of Parliament, cannot effectually be supported but by a general union of Independent Men throughout the Kingdom,

WE whose names are under-written, considering an Oeconomical Reformation in the expenditure of Public Money, to be a most essential and necessary measure for restoring the Freedom of Parliament ;

And considering also, that the representation of the People in Parliament is become extremely unequal, inasmuch that a great majority of Members is returned by decayed and indigent Boroughs, which are either at the command of the Crown, and a few great Families, or else open to general venality ;

venality ; whence support in Parliament may be obtained for the measures of any Administration, however ruinous they may be to the great landed and commercial interests of this Kingdom, contrary to the true intent and use of the institution of Parliaments ; which unequitable distribution of the right to elect Representatives in Parliament is now a principal cause of our numerous Public Evils, to which no radical cure is likely to be applied, till a more adequate Representation of the People hath been established by law.

And considering further, that when the fund of corruption hath been in some competent degree reduced, and a more equal representation of the People obtained, more frequent elections might be restored, not only to the great content of the People, but with certain advantage to the Honour and Integrity of Parliament itself, without the mischievous consequence of exposing Independent Gentlemen to vexatious contests with the Dependents of any Administration.

We do declare our Assent to

1. The Oeconomical Reform requested by the Petitions of the People ; that plan of strict and rigid frugality now indispensably necessary in every department of the State ; that most important regulation for reducing the unconstitutional Influence of the Crown.

2. The proposition for obtaining a more equal representation in Parliament, by the addition of at least One Hundred Knights, to be chosen in a due proportion by the several Counties of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

3. The proposition for Members of the House of Commons to be elected to serve in Parliament for a term not exceeding three years.

And in order more effectually to promote this laudable plan of public Reformation, by our joint assistance in a pacific way, we do associate for that express purpose, and we do testify the same by our signatures respectively. And we do resolve, jointly and separately, to support these necessary regulations to the utmost of our power, by every measure that may be perfectly agreeable to Law and the Constitution.

More

More particularly we do resolve, and do mutually and most solemnly engage, that until a reasonable reform in the expenditure of Public Money hath been obtained, and until regulations for returning at least One Hundred additional County Members to Parliament, and for shortening the duration of Parliament to a term not exceeding three years, have been established by Law, we will support, with our votes and interest, no Candidate whatsoever at the next General Election, or at any future Election, to represent this County, or any other County or Place in Parliament, from whose known integrity and attachment to our free Constitution, and his assent to these constitutional improvements, declared by signing this Association, or in such other mode as to each Candidate may seem most eligible, we shall not be first fully satisfied that he will give his utmost support in Parliament to the following propositions, or to such part of the reform proposed thereby as shall not then be accomplished, viz.

1. For one or more bills to correct profusion in the expenditure of Public Money; to regulate the manner of making all Public Contracts, and the mode of keeping and passing Public Accounts; to reduce exorbitant emoluments of office, and to reform the abuses of sinecure places, and pensions unmerited by Public Service.

2. For a bill to establish greater equality in the representation of the People in Parliament, by allowing the several Counties of the Kingdom of Great-Britain to elect, in a due proportion, One Hundred Knights at least in addition to the present number.


3. For a bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years.

A STATE

A STATE of the ASSOCIATED COUNTIES, &c.

And the *Objects* of their respective *Associations*. *

- Yorkshire*. On the three propositions before-mentioned, viz. In Support of the Oeconomical Petition. 2. Of a Bill for the Addition of at least One Hundred County Members. 3. Of a Bill for shortening the Duration of Parliament to a Term not exceeding Three Years.
- Essex*. - - - On the same Propositions.
- Somersetshire* - Ditto.
- Surrey*. - - - Ditto.
- Buckinghamshire*. Ditto.
- Devonshire*. - - Ditto.
- Middlesex*. - - Ditto.
- City of London*. - Ditto. (Committee now dissolved)
- Hertfordshire*. - On the *first* Proposition.—*Resolve* in Favour of the Second and Third.
- Dorsetshire*. - - On the *first* Proposition.—*Instruct their Members* on the Second and Third.
- Westminster*. - - On the *first* and *Second* Propositions, and *generally* in Favour of shortening the Duration of Parliament.

 The under-mentioned COUNTIES, although not actually associated, have adopted the following measures in favour of the objects of the YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION, at their respective Public Meetings:

- Huntingdonshire*. RESOLVE in favour of an equal representation.
- Gloucestershire*. RESOLVE in favour of short Parliaments, and an equal representation.
- Suffex*. - - - RESOLVE in favour of the æconomical reform, short Parliaments, and an equal representation. Committee authorised to draw up a Form of Association, if judged necessary.
- Kent*.

* This State is supposed to be exact; but it is possible that some Omissions or unintentional Mistakes may have happened in it.

- Kent.* - - - RESOLVE in favour of the *three* propositions of the Yorkshire Association.
- Bedfordshire.* - - RESOLVE in favour of the *third* proposition of the Yorkshire Association.— Committee authorised to draw up a Form of Association, if judged necessary.
- Berkshire.* - - RESOLVE in favour of the *first* and *third* propositions of Yorkshire, and of an equal representation.

P E T I T I O N I N G B O D I E S

Who sent DELEGATES to the General Deputation held in LONDON in 1780.

Counties of *York, Surry, Middlesex, Suffex, Gloucester, Hertford, Kent, Huntingdon, Dorset, Bucks, Chester, Devon, Essex, Somerset, Hants, Northampton*, Cities of *London and Westminster*; and the Towns of *Newcastle, Nottingham, and Gloucester*.

A S S O C I A T E D B O D I E S

Who sent DELEGATES to the General Deputation held in LONDON in 1781.

Middlesex, Westminster, Hertfordshire, Devonshire, Surry, Kent, Huntingdonshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, Essex, and London.

